



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

May 12, 2008

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First and foremost I would like to thank all of you for your efforts over the last year to work with the Office of Health, Safety and Security (HSS) so we may improve the health and safety of the entire Department of Energy workforce. As many of you know, we are now in the second phase of our Focus Group meetings. This phase brings us together to resolve the concerns brought forth in the 2007 meetings. We started with the initial subject of training and from that we learned much. As such, we wanted to take the time to share with each of you some of the lessons. Some we learned, some were expressed from the Union participants, and some were from those of you who joined the Focus Group meetings for the first time. A primary and pleasant overarching lesson was that with a common objective, the collaborative thoughts of many minds was far more powerful than the individual thoughts of each of us--and moreover, much more efficient and effective as we seek to optimize the use of resources. For those of you who were there, we commend each of you for the focused and cooperative ideas and extend our thanks to the Sheet Metal Workers International Association and Gary Batykefer and Dale Hill for facilitating discussions. I know several others of you will lead and facilitate discussions in future meetings and it is the willingness of each of you to "roll up your sleeves" and participate that makes these meetings valuable and successful. We also understand for each of you with this leadership role, you will be coordinating activities among the Unions to then coordinate with HSS. We will do the same to ensure that you too have an integrated and complete picture of HSS actions.

To continue to move ahead to resolve issues I have asked Mari-Jo to ensure that we have a chance to discuss all the topics by October, thereby giving us the full scope of efforts to be undertaken and the opportunity to factor these efforts into our budget obligations for the opening fiscal year. The driving thought behind this approach was due to feedback from several of the Unions who expressed a desire to be realistic in making headway, and to start by improving things right away by accomplishing the possible, rather than planning for the perfect solutions. We agree with this desire to "get some boots on the ground" and in doing so would propose that we combine some of the meetings to ease the burden

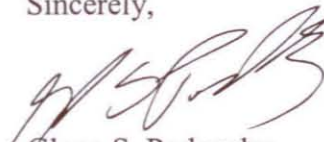


on many of you who need to travel, and to also handle the topics in the most realistic manner. Originally, the meetings were set to allow for leeway in the agendas, as we had not all participated together and the results of this meeting format "experiment" were unknown--no longer the case after the Training meeting. In addition, many of you are extremely busy and the desire for efficacy has become paramount. Do not misunderstand; this in no way will shortchange any of the topics. We believe that these meetings and the potential action items that result are so important that we have decided to extend the meeting length to three hours rather than the original plan for 90 minutes, and the topics will be well coordinated. For example, in August we were to discuss "Central Worker Data Tracking"; in light of what has been learned from the Former Worker Program it would seem remiss to discuss this subject without addressing the consequences of not having readily available/traceable health data. I would hope we could set some focus on the first by learning from the latter. Enclosed, you will find the revised schedule which does not change previously proposed meeting dates, but merely combines them and does so in a way to coordinate the lead function.

As many of you, HSS is eager to set forth tangible and practical actions to make sure each worker can be safer with each passing day.

The Training meeting minutes will be available shortly and will be provided electronically for posting on the HAMMER, Building and Construction trades Department's Center for Construction Research and Training, and AFL-CIO Metal Trades Department websites, as well as, on our new HSS outreach website located at <http://www.HSSOutreach.energy.gov>, which is under construction and should be available after May 16. In addition, for all who did not attend the meeting, the meeting briefing books, in their entirety, will also be provided electronically to ensure all interested parties can have access to the meeting information. Finally, if I can be so bold to edit a famous movie quote from Humphrey Bogart, "I think this is the beginning of a great new working relationship."

Sincerely,



Glenn S. Podonsky
Chief Health, Safety and Security Officer
Office of Health, Safety and Security

Enclosure: HSS/Labor Union 2008 Topical
And Union Related Meeting Schedule
